

793 and officiate in the ceremonies, but it is perhaps true to say that only
767 the beasts for minor sacrifices (recovery from illness, etc.) are
killed by them. Hofmayr states that the distinctive mark of the
[292] *Awet* is a necklace of disc beads of ostrich egg-shell, but that they also
301 wear anklets of glass beads, white and green. The *Awet* eat the flesh
of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine;
they are responsible too for the disposal of the bones of the sacrifice,
which they cast into the river.

778 The contents of the *Awet* vary, but they always include certain
346 sacred spears, called *alade*, representing those used by Nyakang and
his companions.

In 1910 we were told that one of the five huts of the Fenikang
shrine was in a special sense the house of Nyakang, which he was
thought to inhabit. It was distinguished by a number of very rough
• [532] paintings on its outer wall, some of which could be recognized as
representing animals, but we could not learn that the paintings had
any special significance. Before the door of the hut were a number
[114] of horns of the cattle slain in sacrifice (in 1911 wrongly described as
[237] elephant tusks), their broad ends thrust into the ground; whilst
these were said to be skins on the floor, as if for Nyakang to rest upon.
Some of the "spears of Nyakang" (*alade*) are kept here, and there is
in this shrine an extremely sacred stool, which may be kept in this
hut or may be preserved with some of the sacred spears and a number
of elephant tusks in one of the other huts of the shrine,
used by the guardians and for storing the millet brought as
offerings when the crop is cut. In 1911 we were struck almost with
the resemblance of the shrine to a homestead, with exceptionally
large huts; it had been rebuilt since 1910, when we first visited
Fenikang, and there were now no huts in front of any hut. At this

783 time (1911) the shrine had been entrusted by the king to the care
778 of a most intelligent elderly Dinka woman, by name Aker—widow
of the kings Kar and Fadier—who was the chief priestess of the shrine.
She had three huts and a cattle byre near the shrine; in one hut she
[559] kept her beer, and here millet was ground, the two others were for
her slaves, who as well as her cattle were provided by the king. We
are not certain whether she ever slept in the shrine. According
[644] to Shilluk custom Aker had left Kodok during her two pregnancies,
813 but on neither occasion had she been sent to Fenikang; it is, indeed,
improbable that a royal wife would be sent to a village containing
a shrine, as it might be difficult to accommodate her cattle and those
of the shrine attendants as well as the village

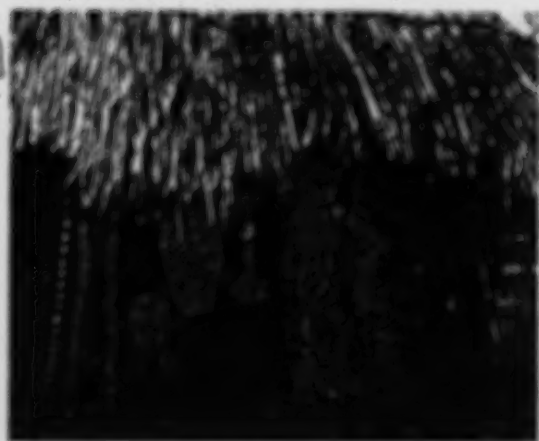
beasts.

346 Plate VII
778



Poolang, exterior of Nyakang in 1909, Kango (Shilluk)

[532]



Poolang, interior of Nyakang, wall paintings

Occupations

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- 323 mostly consisting of ring-shaped lines with dew in them. The pipe-stem is a
 276 long, thick, hollow reed of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ —2 cm in diameter. The junction be-
 531 tween the stick and the bowl is tightly closed with a leather cover. On the
 upper end of the stick a small, sliding gourd with a pointed head is fastened;
 here again the junction is made tight by a leather cover wrapped about it. Along
 the stick four or five cuttings are fastened, by which the pipe is carried; a long,
 pointed stick for cleaning the pipe is tied to the stem with a string. They are
 276 exceedingly fond of smoking, both men and women. The smoking material is a
 little tobacco and much charcoal. The pipe being rather heavy, they usually sit
 down, holding their bowl deep over the pipe while smoking. When sitting in a
 circle they take only one or two draughts, and after that bend the pipe over
 to their neighbors. — Tobacco is not only smoked, but also chewed passionately;
 this habit is more common among women and girls than among men.

SMOKING AND
CHewing OF
TOBACCO

- 756 In cases of sickness the doctor is called. His chief means of curing consist
 756 in charms, but they also know some reasonable medicines, among which cutting
 wounds in the feet place; but although they inflict much pain, they often heal
 a sickness. — Sick people are nursed by their relatives with care; temporary
 residences are fixed for them by screening off a place in the yard.

- 43 Building houses, making fences, dressing skins, working such supports, car-
 ving and polishing clubs and spear sticks, making antelopes' horns and other
 common work is undertaken by every Shilluk. The such supports are "borrowed
 752 by Nykang." They are carved of wood, and are made to resemble the forms
 531 of animals, viz. of hippopotamus, giraffe, deer, camel, catfish and another bird,
 which seems to be an ibis. The Shilluks have no chains or studs; old men
 sometimes sit on a piece of antelope wood, young people squat or lie on the
 ground.

SUCH SUPPORTS

- 463 The craftsmen do not practice their trade with the exclusion of all other kind
 of work; each one of them cultivates his farm and tends his cattle, and only
 during the time there is no farm-work, he works at his craft.

- 438 There are villages which are renowned for practicing certain crafts; some in
 fishing or hunting, some in cattle breeding or cultivating date, some in making
 pots or baskets, etc. As these goods are exchanged between the villages, a little
 trade is going on; but in this trade among the natives no money is used, and

- 443 it is practiced only occasionally; they have no markets. The very little develop-
 ment of trade is illustrated by the expression used for it: *apong*, which means
 "to sell" as well as "to buy"; all trade being done by barter, selling and buying
 are identical actions; the natives cannot "buy" anything without at the same time
 439 "selling" another thing; he exchanges one thing for another. In trading with
 177 the Arab or Greek merchant they have, however, learned the use of money;

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Introduction

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others one against the sun and his son; vide page 159.

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When he felt his end approaching, he assembled all the chiefs of his kingdom for a splendid festival. While all were merry, suddenly a great wind arose, and scattered all those present. In this moment Nyikang took a cloth, wound it tightly round his neck, and thus choked himself.

But many Shilluks firmly believe that Nyikang is still alive. The Rev. Oyler writes to me: "When I asked how Nyikang died, they were filled with amazement at my ignorance and steadily maintained that he never died. If he dies, all the Shilluks will die. He, Dab, and five other kings ascended to heaven, where Nyikang prays for the Shilluks (?). They say that he disappeared as the wind".

716 HOW STRAND IS ADVISED

Nyikang is the ancestor of the Shilluk nation and the founder of the Shilluk dynasty. He is worshipped, sacrifices and prayers are offered to him; he may be said to be lifted to the rank of a demi-god, though they never forget that he has been a real man. He is expressly designated as "father" in comparison with God.

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In almost every village there is a little hut dedicated to Nyikang, or to some other ancient king. In form it is like the common houses, but much smaller and more slender. On its walls sometimes rough drawings in white, red, and black colour are seen, consisting simply in line-ornaments or representing animals. These drawings are made by women, with white, red and black earth, and are renewed every year before the chief prayers are offered. These huts are commonly called *ket ri* "place of the king" i. e. of Nyikang. Besides these small huts they have a number of greater temples, which are in form like the Shilluk-hut, but of much larger size. They are found in most of the villages devoted to Nyikang. These "sacred villages" are, Akurwar, Wan,¹ Fonyikang, Nyikodo (Nikodo), Opiu, Nyelwal, Gidiu, Opiu, Idapi. These houses, the small as well as the larger, are the places where Nyikang is worshipped. In them, at least in some, a number of reliques are preserved, which are considered holy and are held in great veneration. Among these are a statue of Nyikang made of antelope-wood; the holy spear, drum, and shield of Nyikang, a digging stick, ancient metal ornaments and clothes, etc. Spoils from wars are also dedicated to Nyikang, and are preserved in the temples.

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In times of need, when sickness or war are threatening, but above all when rain does not come in due time, the people assemble round the house of Nyikang and pray to him. This is done by dancing and at the same time singing prayers. At the beginning of the rainy season, when they are about to plant corn, the regular chief prayers take place; on this occasion an animal is slain as a sacrifice to Nyikang. Before the transaction of any serious business the elders of the village assemble around the temple of Nyikang, to ask for his counsel.

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¹ The origin of the Shilluks by the British all succeeding Shilluk kings have finished their lives by the same form of death.

² This Wan is not the place in the Bahr Ghazal Province, but is situated on the left bank of the White Nile between Tondike and Kodak.

CHAPTER III

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR ORIGIN

101 THE reader will by this be anxious to know something of the people who inhabit this promised land, the people whom up to this I have spoken of as the Shilluk. That is the name by which they are known as a tribe both among themselves and by others. At present the tribe numbers about 120,000.

[161]

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The Shilluk are for the most part tall and lean in appearance, taller in general than the average, though the mean height of six feet attributed to them by some writers is something of an exaggeration. In features and colour they vary very much, ranging from the squat, ebony-black face with beetling brows, flat broad nose and thick lips to the long-headed aristocratic type, light in colour, with high cheek bones, long straight nose and thin lips. An almost universal

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custom among them is to tattoo the brows so that the flesh is raised to form, as it were, a row of beads running from temple to temple. This practice of cicatrization often finds expression too in the pricking out on back, breast or arms

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of elaborate designs in the shape of a scorpion, a fish or a lemon. The custom of knocking out the lower incisor teeth of children is still frequently practised, often, strangely enough, at the wish of the child himself, or herself, for girls

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also submit to the ordeal. At one time it seems to have been obligatory for the children of commoners, but it is no longer so. The teeth are extracted when the child is about eleven or twelve years old, and many a pleasant-looking face is spoiled

[142]

by this crude dentistry. Most native Africans have beautifully white teeth, and it seems a pity that a child should be thus mutilated, and that a beaming smile instead of revealing two rows of lovely teeth should expose an ugly gap in the lower jaw.